DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 511 UD 026 696

AUTHOR	Murata, Alice K., Ed.; Salvador-Burris, Juanita, Ed.
TITLE	Issues in Community Research: Asian American Perspectives. Occasional Paper No. 5.
INSTITUTION	Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center, Chicago, IL.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-934584-04-04
PUB DATE	80
GRANT	DHEW-1-ROI-MH32820
NOTE	56p.; Papers presented at a workshop celebrating the Silver Anniversary of Special Service for Groups, Inc. (Los Angeles, CA, November 16, 1977).
AVAILABLE FROM	Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center, 1033 West Van Buren Street, Chicago, IL 60607 ($2.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Action Research; Advocacy; *Asian Americans; Community Responsibility; *Community Study; Mental Health; Mental Health Programs; Minority Groups; Models; Moral Issues; *Pacific Americans; *Researchers; Research Methodology; *Research Problems; *Social Science Research
IDENTIFIERS	Community Mental Health Centers

ABSTRACT

This document comprises a collection of workshop papers addressing the issues of doing research on the complex social and human problems faced in any community from an Asian American perspective. The following topics are discussed: (1) the nature of community research; (2) the pros and cons of pure basic and applied research; (3) the nature and role of advocacy social science research; (4) the ethical responsibilities of community-based researchers to the community, and those of the community to the researcher; and (5) the problems of an outsider as opposed to those of an insider doing research on ethnic and racial minority groups. Contents are the following: (1) "Issues in Community Research" (F. J. Miyamoto); (2) "Research for What? Beyond Needs Assessment Research" (L. C. Hirata); (3) "Community Research among Asian Americans: Problematic Issues and Resolutions" (C. Loo); (4) "A New Model for Community-Action Research" (P. Park); and (5) "Community Research and the Asian American Mental Health Research Center" (W. T. Liu). A summary of audience discussion following the presentations and a section of conclusions are included. Some papers include brief lists of references. (FMW)

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issues in community research:

Asian American Perspectives

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Essays by;
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The workshop described herein was made possible through DHEW Grant No. 5 ROI MH25589 awarded by NIMH to fund the Asian American Mental Health Research Center (AAMHRC).

Funding for publication of this volume has been made possible by DHEW Grant No. 1 ROI MH32820, awarded to AAMHRC's successor, the Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center (P/AAMHRC), 1640 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois 60608.

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Manufactured in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Issues in community research.

(Occasional paper - Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center ; no. 5)

Papers presented at a workshop held on Nov. 16, 1977 in Los Angeles.

Includes bibliographies.

1. Community--Research--United States--Congresses. 2. Action research--United States--Congresses. 3. Community mental health services--Research--United States--Congresses. 4. Asian Americans--Congresses. I. Miyamoto, Frank. II. Murata, Alice K. III. Salvador-Burris, Juanita. IV. Title: Community research. V. Series: Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center. Occasional paper - Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center ; no. 5.

HM131.I73 307'.07'273 79-89000

ISBN 0-934584-04-4

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph addresses the issues of doing research on the complex social and human problems faced in any community. Those issues include: What is community research? What are the pros and cons of pure basic reseach and applied research? What is the nature and role of advocacy social science research? What are the ethical responsibilities of community-based researchers to the community, and what are those of the community to the researcher? What are the problems of an outsider as opposed to those of an insider doing research on ethnic and racial minority groups?

These issues are of particular interest and importance to the Asian American Mental Health Research Center (AAMHRC) because of its long-standing commitment to quality community research. AAMHRC is the mental health research and development center for Pacific/Asian Americans funded by the Center for Minority Group Mental Health Programs of the National Institute of Mental Health.

The workshop in which the papers in this volume were originally presented was part of the Silver Anniversary Celebration of AAMHRC's grantee agency, Special Service for Groups, Inc. The workshop was held in Los Angeles on November, 16, 1977. Researchers, community members, service providers, and academicians met together to articulate, explore, and clarify the problematic issues involved in the varying conceptions and practices of community research.

Nowhere is the diversity of opinion on these issues more pointed than in the struggle to define community research. The working definitions offered in these papers represent a full spectrum of philosophical differences; community research is characterized by one as research that meets the conceptual and empirical standards of scientific investigation with the added requirement that the applicability of its theoretical findings be clearly demonstrated; by another, it may be defined by the reason a particular investigation is undertaken, as opposed to the place the investigation takes place; still another believes it to be research aimed at creating a community in response to a perceived need; or, in another's view, it may be an investigation undertaken in opposition to what is perceived to be the individualistic, competitive, and elitist approach of academic researchers.

Dr William Liu, Director of AAMHRC, chaired the session; the speakers were Lucie Cheng Hirata, sociologist at UCLA; Chalsa Loo, psychologist at the University of California, Santa Cruz; Frank Miyamoto, sociologist at the University of Washington, Seattle; and Peter Park, sociologist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Juanita Salvador-Burris and Alice Murata, research associates at AAMHRC, served as workshop coordinators.

Note: The Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center, Inc. succeeded SSG, Inc. as grantee agency of the Center project in August, 1979. For historical accuracy, the original project name, AAMHRC, has been used throughout this volume.

ISSUES IN COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Frank Miyamoto
University of Washington

In his letter inviting my participation on this panel, Dr. William Liu listed six questions concerning community research which he asked the panel members to consider. I cannot promise to cover all his questions, but I intend to organize my discussion around them. His first question asks: What is meant by community research? Let me begin by considering only part of that question: What is research?

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

To me, research means systematic inquiry with the aim of solving a problem or set of problems. Thus, if one's car fails to start and a systematic investigation is undertaken to determine its reason for failure, that is a kind of research. There are two kinds of activities in research. One might sit in the car and simply think about why the car fails to start, and do so effectively even in a complicated situation if one is a good mechanic; or one might get out and check the gas tank, the battery, the distributor, the fuel pump, or whatever--that is, engage in data gathering. So there are two sides to research, the ideational or thinking side, and the empirical or getting-one's-hands-dirty side. It should be noted that the thinking and data-gathering may not be done haphazardly but must have a methodical systematic character. The investigation of why one's car fails to start, however, is not usually regarded as research, for two reasons: it lacks the quality of sustained long-term inquiry that is associated with research, and the problem under study is only of personal interest, not of general concern.

In the foregoing definition of research, the word that deserves to be underlined is problem. Altogether too many research projects are undertaken in which no problem is defined, or the problem is so poorly identified as to preclude the possibility of a successful study. An entire discussion could profitably be devoted to the problem of defining a research problem, but the limited time available permits consideration of only one aspect. I want to note that there are three types of research problems--the prediction problem, the understanding problem, and the control problem--and I want to briefly describe each type.

Typical prediction problems are weather-forecasting, betting on horse races, and predicting the likelihood of success of a newly admitted student at a university. Suppose the outcome (tomorrow's weather, the winning horse, or whatever) is called Y. All that is needed to solve a prediction problem is to find a variable X, or more likely a set of variables $X_1, X_2, X_3, \ldots, X_k$, which are correlated with Y. In the prediction problem there is the peculiarity that the correlation need not make sense, that it only needs to be high and persistent. It was once found that the annual miles of paving completed in a certain district in India correlated highly and regularly with the birth rate in Wisconsin. Hence, the miles of paving in India could be used as a predictor of the birth rate in Wisconsin as long as the correlation persisted.

In the problem of understanding, we again are interested in some outcome such as discrimination, or juvenile delinquency, or parent-child conflicts, which again may be labeled Y. And again we seek variables $X_1, X_2, X_3, \ldots, X_k$ which are highly correlated with Y. But unlike prediction, where it sufficed that a correlation was high, in the understanding problem we seek a causal relationship among the variables. That is, the relationship must be of the form: if $X_1, X_2, X_3, \ldots, X_k$ have a certain patterned relationship to Y, and only if that pattern occurs, then Y will occur. Controlled experimentation is regarded as the ultimate method for determining such causal relationships because it is the method par excellence for isolating such a relationship as: if X, and only if X, then Y.

Finally, by the control problem I mean an inquiry into the kinds of interventions or manipulations of variables which may be expected to yield certain desired outcomes. For example, one may wish to reduce racial discrimination, or juvenile delinquency, or parent-child conflicts, and the question is: What intervention will produce the desired end? The research format is exactly the same as in seeking understanding: that is, it involves seeking causal relationships between the X variables and Y. The unique situation of the control problem is that the relationships between the X and Y variables cannot be simply theoretical; that is, the X's must be very concrete and manipulable. For example, in seeking to reduce racial discrimination in a certain community, it may not be at all useful to know that a causal relationship exists between a tendency to support discriminative practices and the kind of attitude socialization which a person received in childhood, even assuming that this was a true and invariant finding. The need is to find variables which can be concretely manipulated and which are known invariantly to produce certain desired outcomes.

Two purposes are served by the foregoing summary of what I mean by research. First, it indicates the features which I assume are found in all research: the specification of a problem, the identification of independent variables or those factors which one uses for the purpose of predicting or explaining, and the use of a systematic methodology for data gathering and data analyses. Second, the distinction drawn among the types of research problems indicates that with variations in the research situation the research requirements may also vary. Given these specifications about research, I believe we are now in a position to answer several of Dr. Liu's questions.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Question 4 asks: What methods and techniques are most appropriate for research among Asian Americans? The requirements of research outlined above no doubt suggest that I espouse a fairly rigorous approach in all research. I regard research as a means of arriving at truths or knowledge, and in that endeavor the ultimate requirement is that hypotheses be tested by a rigorous method approximating an experimental design. A rigorous method is the ultimate requirement, but in social research it is not uncommon that an emphasis on methodological rigor is accompanied by a decline in the significance of the research findings. The reason for this paradox is that many features of social phenomena do not lend themselves readily to measurement or to controlled observation--at least in the present state of the art--and rigorous methodology is therefore often achieved only by distorting the reality under observation. How are we to resolve this paradox?

It is useful to consider again, as a kind of research problem, our earlier example of the car that fails to start. Confronted by the problem, some of us begin with a few well-chosen expletives or perhaps a brief prayer, but most of us know that these actions have nothing directly to do with solving the problem. The usual procedure is to deliberate on the possible reasons for the car's failure and then to test different hypotheses systematically, using such tools as one has on hand. Failing in these efforts, one may have to call on an expert who may use more refined instruments to solve the problem. The point is, one should be guided in an investigation by the problem at hand, and use that degree of sophistication of methodology available and required to solve the problem. Some methods scarcely deserve to be called methods, some are poor substitutes for available better methods, and still others are oversophisticated for the situation. It should be possible, however, to judge which of the available ones is likely to yield an answer to the problem and is suitable in the situation.

The other point to be made about the paradox of the inverse relationship between methodological rigor and non-meaningful findings is this: in all areas of research, the use of sophisticated methodology is increasingly appropriate as the knowledge base of the problem broadens. Conversely, in an area where the knowledge base is limited, highly refined (observational) methods may not only prove useless but actually inhibit the research. In the latter circumstance, description, the most primitive method of scientific observation, is often the most appropriate. When background knowledge is lacking, the initial requirement usually is to acquire sufficient general knowledge so that specialized methods can be applied. Description is the best method of providing generalized knowledge. Note, however, that description, although the most elementary method of scientific observation, is by no means an unsophisticated technique, and requires considerable training to be properly used. Furthermore, even in description, the problem under study should be in mind constantly, the variables serving the explanatory function identified, and the descriptions made to bear on the objective of explanation. As the knowledge base bearing on a problem broadens, there is generally a requirement that an increasingly sophisticated methodology be employed if further knowledge is to be gained.

In short, I am arguing that research is a no-holds-barred contest, that any method that has a reasonable likelihood of advancing knowledge and of solving a problem is fair game for trial. I also argue that certain criteria are available for judging the kind of methodology that should be employed on a given problem; for example that the degree of methodological sophistication to be employed varies with the extent of knowledge in the research area. Regardless of the level of methodological sophistication, however, there are certain criteria of consistency, correspondence, and pragmatism by which all methodologies are to be judged. By these criteria some methods are "good" and others are "bad," and the researcher needs to be conscious of these criteria in designing his studies.

Dr. Liu has asked whether the "traditional" or the "nontraditional" method is to be preferred in research on Asian Americans. I would choose a research methodology, not by whether it is traditional or nontraditional, but by its logical likelihood of yielding useful knowledge on the stated problem. Similarly, I would not regard an "insider" as necessarily more likely to achieve a problem solution than an "outsider," although there are conditions in research which tend to favor the insider. The insider's advantage, however, may be outweighed by the outsider's greater knowledge, greater ingenuity, or a variety of other qualities which affect research performance.

"ACTION" AND "UNDERSTANDING" RESEARCH

Dr. Liu's Question 5 asks whether there is any reason to prefer "action research" over "understanding research," or vice versa. I earlier indicated that the problem of understanding requires a causal explanation demonstrating that an outcome Y occurs if and only if a set of other conditions, X_1, X_2, X_3, . . . , X_k, occurs. I then went on to note that the explanation in the control problem must have the same format. The only new element in the control problem is the requirement that the explanatory variables, the X's, must be concrete and manipulable, and that their asserted influence on the outcome, Y, be demonstrated. The control problem, in short, is simply a special case of the understanding problem with the added requirement that the applicability and usefulness of a theoretical finding be demonstrated. Finally, so-called action research is control research in my language.

My argument leads to the conclusion that there is no choice between action research and understanding research. The one depends on the other. Their interdependence is clearly illustrated by the historical roles played by two of the greatest mathematician-physicists in all history, Archimedes and Isaac Newton. Both men are known today primarily for their contributions to basic science, but in their day both were also renowned for solving a variety of engineering problems important to their societies. If genuine solutions of vexing social problems in our world are ever achieved, I would bet on social and behavioral scientists with clear understanding of the underlying principles of human behavior to give us those solutions.

It is largely a matter of taste, temperament, and interest as to which line of research an individual chooses for his main focus. However, each approach has certain advantages and disadvantages which are worth mentioning. In so-called action research, the goal of action is generally clearly understood and the problem is to determine how to get to the goal. The advantage of this situation is that any proposition arguing that specified manipulations of conditions X_1, X_2, . . . , X_k will enable one to reach goal Y may be directly subjected to verification. One tries the specified manipulations and if one reaches the goal the proposition is true; if one fails to reach the goal the proposition is false. By contrast, in so-called understanding research, the propositions are generally expressed in theoretical terms and there usually is no clear-cut, concrete test by which the validity or invalidity of a proposition may be verified. Action research's propositions are tested in the course of the research itself, which, I believe, is a great advantage. On the other hand, action research usually arises in

circumstances where quick answers are sought. The result is that the careful preparation which any good research requires is given inadequate attention, and the findings produced often prove to be of questionable value. Furthermore, the relationship between action research and understanding research is analogous to that between engineering and physics. Engineers largely depend on the knowledge developed by physicists to solve their problems, and I believe social engineers similarly will need to depend on the knowledge of social scientists for their solutions.

ADVOCACY

Dr. Liu also asks about the nature and role of advocacy in social science research. I am not sure what advocacy research means although some people no doubt believe that a clear distinction can be drawn between advocacy and non-advocacy research. My difficulty is that I perceive almost all social scientists as being in some sense advocates in their research. I know of no one engaged in research on juvenile delinquency, racial prejudice and discrimination, poverty, or marital conflict who has undertaken the research because of an interest in increasing those problems; the motivation is invariably the contrary, to reduce those problems. There is also an underlying interest among social scientists in seeking to change the world, usually toward making the world a better place to live. I infer that those who speak of advocacy research have in mind something different from the activities ordinarily engaged in by social scientists. Perhaps the term is intended to refer to research that supports a political ideology. Personally, I reject any ideologically-oriented emphasis in research. Research is of value to human welfare only to the degree that researchers are free to maintain an open mind concerning the interpretation of any finding and are constrained in their thinking only by the rules of the logic of inquiry. Research constrained by political ideology, however, I believe conflicts with the basic rule of scientific inquiry that every plausible hypothesis should be given an equal chance of being proved correct. Advocacy research in the latter sense, I believe, would not contribute to social welfare and in fact is likely to prove damaging to society.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Up to this point I have discussed research as research, but have said little about community research, which is the topic of this session. If you will forgive me for persisting with formalisms, in discussing community research I want first to deal with the question: What is a community? A community refers to a local concentration of people who because of shared needs and

problems, develop organizations and agencies to meet those needs, and because of their shared activities also develop a social relational network. By this definition the incorporated city of Los Angeles is clearly a community, but within the Los Angeles area, those structured relations developed by the several Asian American groups separately--the Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and no doubt others as well--likewise represent distinct communities.

Most communities form because people who are drawn to a geographical area due to their employment find that certain basic needs such as schools, churches, recreational facilities, police and fire protection, public utilities, and the like--which are needs felt by virtually all residents of the area--can only be provided by cooperative effort. The racial or ethnic community, by contrast, is drawn together not simply to satisfy basic human wants but because a group of people have a distinct racial or ethnic identity, and needs arise from this identity which cannot be satisfied by any community other than their own. In short, the racial or ethnic distinctiveness is the ultimate reason for being of these communities, and it is scarcely possible to understand racial-ethnic communities without focusing on the distinctive marks around which these communities mobilize.

There are, of course, many different questions about Asian American communities which are worth considering, but in the time remaining I want to discuss one issue, namely, what kinds of community research problems seem especially worth studying. Even this question could be answered in different ways depending on the perspective one brings to the question. I shall deal with the question as a sociologist.

The questions I focus on arise out of concerns which I believe are prominent in the Asian American communities today. They also are major concerns of sociologists who specialize in community research. Many of the ideas which I touch on, for example, are developed in articles which appear in the Annual Review of Sociology for 1975 and 1976, notably "Race and Ethnic Relations" by Robin William, "Community Power" by Terry Clark, and "Urban Ethnography" by Gerald Suttles.

Ethnic Solidarity

One problem of Asian American communities that I consider to be of interest bears on ethnic solidarity, a topic on which I did my first research forty years ago. In that study, which I entitled Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle, I was interested in the question of how it was that the Japanese minority

maintained such a highly organized ethnic community structure as it evidenced at the time. In brief, my conclusion was that the immigrant Issei, the dominant group at the time, shaped their community in a form that gave them a functional place within the larger American society. I conceived of the Issei, and the Nisei too for that matter, as a particular kind of people who, when confronted by the restrictions of the larger society, shaped a community of their own that would aid their effective functioning. I earlier mentioned that communities arose out of the shared setting in which persons with a certain kind of self-identity could function with the sense that their identity was accepted and appreciated. The subcommunities of the Nisei could be understood to be reflecting their different identity characteristics as compared to the Issei.

I naively assumed, however, that as the Issei gradually disappeared and were replaced by the Nisei and Sansei, Japanese American ethnic solidarity would substantially disappear. Japanese American ethnic solidarity has declined, to be sure, but is has also persisted with much more vigor than was anticipated under earlier theoretical expectations. Put another way, the Nisei as well as the Sansei communities persist, and the question is why they do. Incidentally, this question can be generalized not only to the other Asian American groups, but also to the Italian Americans, Polish Americans, and even the Irish Americans.

Prejudice and discrimination are usually regarded as the main reasons for the persistent identity concerns of minorities. The tendency of the majority group to exclude minorities certainly contributes to the persistence of ethnic communities. It may be noted, however, that the problem of identity loss is a widespread problem in American society. Given the depersonalized character of American society, might it be that we all are in some degree confronted by the same problem of finding a functional place within the larger society. But perhaps we ethnics have the advantage of being able to find in our own ethnic group a means of maintaining a meaningful identity which those without any ethnic association lack. Viewed in this light, ethnicity is a value rather than a trait to be decried. In any case, I believe there are research questions worthy of investigation about the degree to which ethnic communities persist, how they are maintained, and why they persist.

Assimilation

A second problem that interests me concerns assimilation. Assimilation is an old problem that reached a peak of interest among social scientists fifty years ago as the first continuous flow

of immigrants to America ended; however, the problem is receiving renewed attention because of the recent interest in questions of interracial relations, cultural pluralism, and ethnicity. In addition, in the Asian American area, new questions have arisen due to the recent wave of immigration from Asia.

Although I have not studied this new Asian immigration closely, I am struck by a notable contrast with the earlier one, in that the recent immigrants do not seem to form visible ethnic communities as did previous ones. Especially since 1965, the immigration from Taiwan and Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Korea has been substantial, with lesser numbers from Japan and Southeast Asia. To my knowledge, however, there is no sudden blossoming of the Chinese, Pilipino, Korean, and other Asian communities such as might have been anticipated in an earlier era.

I am certain social networks are being established, but the new immigrants obviously do not require the intensely organized community structures which were necessities in an earlier time. What are the reasons for the difference? The higher educational and training levels of the new immigrants seem to permit much freer access than before to favorable residential and employment opportunities. The social maturation of American society seems substantially to aid this adaptation. The pre-existence of the older Asian communities also seems to aid the adaptation by satisfying needs which are not otherwise met.

If this is a fair picture of the situation, a number of questions may be raised. What kind of ethnic communities are the recent immigrants creating, and how do they differ from the communities of the earlier immigrants? Why the difference? What problems, if any, arise from the lack of intense organization within the new communities, and what advantages? And how is the assimilation of the new immigrants different from that of the old immigrants as a consequence of their looser ties with an ethnic community?

Relationships with Power Structure

Finally, there is a third problem concerning the way in which the Asian American ethnic communities relate to or fail to relate to the power structure of the larger community. There are two questions. First, when an Asian American community as a community needs to accomplish some objective, how is this done? Second, when the end in view requires some linkage with the larger society, how is such a linkage established? Unfortunately, time does not allow an elaboration of these questions, so I leave them with you simply as questions to be explored.

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RESEARCH FOR WHAT?
BEYOND NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESEARCH

Lucie C. Hirata
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University of California at Los Angeles

Community research is not about or on the community per se, or to put it another way, its defining characteristic is not where the research is done, but for what purpose and for whom the research is done.

"Research for what?" is not a new question. But researchers were only forced to face it when the question was integrated into calls for educational relevance during the Third World student strikes. The answer that researchers typically give is that "of course, research is for the betterment of the community and the lives of its residents." This answer assumes that all residents have the same interests, which I do not believe.

Defined this way, community research generally means an assessment of the needs of the community through a survey of its residents. Based on these expressed needs, the researcher develops or helps to develop a proposal for federal or other funds to meet these needs. Usually it is to set up a health clinic, a breakfast program for the aged, or a general service center in the community. The researcher feels no obligation to analyze the needs expressed by the community residents, search for their roots, publicize widely what s/he feels to be the causes of the problems, and work with community members toward some long-term, fundamental change. In some sense our situation is analogous to the different levels of medical treatment and research. The patient complains of a stomachache; the doctor gives him two aspirin to relieve the pain. Another doctor may prescribe a series of tests to determine what causes the stomachache. If it is cancer, the doctor treats it according to his/her judgment and training. A research physician will try to determine what causes cancer. Unfortunately, our community research seldom ventures beyond the aspirin stage. We tend to concern ourselves only with symptoms and never with causes.

But, of course, our exclusive concern over the symptoms rather than the causes is understandable. Researchers are caught in a number of dilemmas and contradictions. Social science researchers have been taught that science is value-free. Those who believe what they were taught aspire to do value-free research. If their target area is the community, for whatever

reason--and the reason is seldom explicitly stated--they hesitate to go beyond the manifest conditions lest they reveal their values and be accused of being unscientific. On the other hand, if the researcher chooses to go beyond the symptoms, there is always the problem of whose values should guide the analysis--those of the researcher or those of the community? It is usually assumed that they are never the same. While the community is believed to be of one mind, the researcher is believed to have an interest opposite to that held by the community. The simplest thing to do, and indeed the solution that most researchers have chosen, is simply to repeat what the residents have reported. Since most people are not likely to have developed an integrated interpretation of their own problems, what they report, again, are symptoms rather than the cause.

Because the problem is a complex one, there can be no easy answer. But I believe that real community research must go beyond needs assessment, and that a researcher's obligation includes providing an explanation of the symptoms as well as an accurate accounting of the symptoms themselves. We must give communities more credit than we have been giving them. If our interpretive analysis is not credible, community members will not accept it. The important thing is that researchers submit their interpretations to public scrutiny, rather than hide behind the fallacy of value-free research and continue to turn out simple catalogs of symptoms.

I sometimes feel that our problem is not that we do not know what needs most of our community members have, but rather why they have these needs, and why these needs continue to be unmet. Perhaps research can begin to help us understand these questions.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS: PROBLEMATIC ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS

Chalsa Loo
University of California at Santa Cruz

INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to discuss some of the problematic issues involved in the conception and practice of community research among Asian Americans from my perspective. My remarks will deal with some of the problematic issues for the academic researcher rather than for the indigenous researcher, since I am more familiar with the former role. My purpose in raising these issues is two-fold: first, to encourage researchers to be more critical of their attitudes and approaches to community research, and, second, to increase the understanding of the Asian American community concerning some of the dilemmas faced by the academic researcher who attempts to conduct community research. A raised consciousness of the dilemmas and needs of both parties will lead to more cooperative and constructive research that will benefit Asian American and Third World peoples. Due to time constraints I shall address a few of many problematic issues; I shall refer to them as (1) geographical and emotional proximity, (2) time and toughmindedness, and (3) divergent orientations, attitudes, and styles of the scientists and the ethnic community. Wherever possible, I will suggest resolutions to these dilemmas.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND EMOTIONAL PROXIMITY

In many cases of research on Asian American communities, successful community research requires that the researcher live in geographical and emotional proximity to the community s/he is studying. I am defining geographical proximity to mean residing in the same city and/or town, and I am defining emotional proximity to mean rapport with the community. These two conditions can serve several important functions: achieving an understanding of the community at a broader and deeper level; establishing cooperative relationships between the researchers and community members; and obtaining needed community consultation and participation to assure research relevance and validity.

Josephson (1970) describes a study in which problems arose as a consequence of the failure to solicit community participation. This example represents a case of inadequate emotional proximity. Josephson and his colleagues from Columbia University planned to conduct interview survey research in Harlem, New

York. Three of their interviewers, who were fired for raising misgivings about Columbia's image in Harlem, initiated community protest. As a consequence, the investigators were forced to narrow the scope of the project and to seriously consider aborting the study. Josephson offers three explanations for their failure to solicit community participation: first, he claims that the investigators were uncertain as to how to form a community advisory committee; second, he claims that the investigators did not know who represented the community; and third, he claims there was little community interest in their research prior to the controversy. I maintain that these are weak and unconvincing reasons to community people. Emotional proximity of the investigators to the community would have taught them who represented the community and how best to form a community advisory committee. Furthermore, the emotional distance of the investigators from the community precluded both the development of community interest in the research and the investigators' learning of any community interest that might have developed.

The concept of geographical and emotional proximity is not quite in keeping with the pure scientific approach of the natural sciences. An ethnic community is not a specimen to be examined under a microscope by scientists who sterilize their hands before handling the specimen. The farther the geographical and emotional distance kept between the researcher and the community, the more "lab-like" the study will be to both the researcher and the community, and the greater the likelihood that such research will fail.

Having established the importance of geographical and emotional proximity, let us consider the problematic issues surrounding it. Achieving such proximity does not pose much of a problem for Asian American scholars in those areas containing large Asian American populations, such as the cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Jose, Seattle, Sacramento, San Diego, Anaheim, or Stockton (the top ten cities in terms of Asian American populations). The problem arises for those researchers who are not conveniently located near the communities they wish to work in. The academic researcher who lives far from an Asian American community must obtain a leave of absence to achieve geographical and emotional proximity to the community of study, thereby often risking financial and professional security. Unless a faculty member has accumulated sabbatical leave, s/he must request a leave of absence without pay in order to leave her/his institution. Unless the researcher is independently wealthy, s/he needs outside funding, which often means that s/he must have a funded research grant. However, obtaining a funded research grant often requires a person with a

solid research reputation and with the time to devote to preparing a large research grant proposal. This type of faculty member is often uninterested in community research. This is because many such faculty members have had to follow a traditional approach to achieve their academic status and consequently it is difficult for them to be in touch with community issues and experiences. Moreover, ethnic faculty members who have the greatest ethnic and applied consciousness are also those who are asked to devote energy and time to Third World student needs and who do accommodate these needs. Such heavy demands give faculty members little available time to develop research proposals for large research grants.

To resolve this problem, it would be helpful if greater funding sources were made available to support the salaries of ethnic faculty who must leave their institutions to conduct community research, if greater academic latitude were provided to ethnic faculty who must leave their institutions temporarily so that their academic status is not jeopardized, if funding were made available to ethnic faculty for leaves of absence to devote time and energy exclusively to the development of research proposals for community research, and if research institutes were established or encouraged to support Third World faculty to develop and conduct community research.

TIME AND TOUGHMINDEDNESS

As Cowen, Lorion and Dorr (1974) point out, the prospect of community research is discouraging for many young investigators. Rewards are slow and uncertain, products are less than objective, and are subject to the criticism of "tough-minded" colleagues. Good community research is often time-consuming so that a junior faculty member can often conduct several publishable experimental studies in the time it takes to conduct meaningful community research. The problems of time and toughmindedness can be ameliorated by the aforementioned funding support as well as through increased collaborative efforts of social scientists who conduct community research. Mechanisms for collaborative and supportive research endeavors need to be developed and used.

DIVERGENT ORIENTATIONS, ATTITUDES, AND STYLES OF THE SCIENTIST AND THE ETHNIC COMMUNITY

Further problematic issues for good community research are contained in the divergent orientations, attitudes, and styles of the scientist and the ethnic community. Divergent orientations refers to the theoretical-empirical orientation of the scientist compared to the service and applied orientation of the ethnic

community. Divergent attitudes refers to the objective value-free attitudes of the scientist compared to the appropriate political and humanistic values requested of researchers by the community. Divergent styles refers to the competitive style of the scientist compared to the cooperative style needed for community research's divergent orientations.

Social scientists frequently conduct research to test theories of behavior. They are interested in correlations among and between variables so as to better understand the world and the order of things. The desire to be useful is only one of several possible motives of a scientist. As mentioned by Kuhn (1962), a scientist can also be motivated by the excitement of exploring new territory, the hope of finding order, the drive to test established knowledge, or the challenge of solving a puzzle that no one before has solved or solved so well.

Research that meets with high approval in the scientific community is grounded in theory, proposes to test these theories, and articulates carefully conceptualized questions. Since review committees of funding agencies are often composed of scientists, scientific criteria are used to judge research proposals. This is not to say that no scientists or funding agencies are interested in or concerned with applied problems; some are. But the theoretically and methodologically strong research study is still highly valued by many funding agencies.

In contrast to this is the service orientation of ethnic communities. Cowen, Lorion, and Dorr (1974) resolve this discrepancy by contending that the community researcher must accommodate the action-oriented, "pro-service", and "anti-research" orientations of most community program people, even though this may be an obstacle to good community research. Joan Moore (1967) has pointed out that the disinterested pursuit of science is not a particularly meaningful goal of most Mexican Americans; this is probably true of most ethnic communities.

Thus, for community research to be well received by an Asian American community, it is helpful to have project measures and goals that relate to service needs of the community; however, in keeping with the researcher's professional commitment to science, the research should deal with conceptual and/or theoretical issues and use sound methodology. While these respective considerations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they can create slight problems, as I will describe from personal experience.

I initially conceptualized my research to be an investigation of the relationships among density, crowding, and stress in

Chinatown, San Francisco. The research design was intended to test several untested or narrowly tested hypotheses of previous researchers. After discussing these with several members of the Chinatown community individually, I realized that I had been operating on a rather esoteric plane for some of the people. The gathering of baseline data on housing conditions and on the frequency of health and mental health symptoms, and the validation and elaboration of demographic data were more in keeping with their interests. The discussions with community members helped me to broaden my perspective and recognize the applied nature of their interests which were embedded in my design but were not clearly apparent.

I also noticed this difference in orientation when I wrote my renewal grant proposal. One draft highlighted the baseline data and the applied relevance of the study; the other draft highlighted the theoretical and conceptual significance of the research and was written in ways more appealing to Anglo academics. The former draft would be more appealing to the Chinatown audience, the latter draft to NIMH reviewers. One possible resolution of these differences is to begin with a descriptive discussion followed by an analytic one. I am not sure how best to handle these orientation discrepancies, but regardless, research that represents a partnership between the scholar and the community will help the community become more aware of itself and will help the scholar to reformulate his concepts (Guzman, 1967).

I want now to discuss divergent orientations on the basis of the profession of the researcher. I suspect that it is the sociological or social psychological nature of research that alienates Asian American communities. Furthermore, it is the sociological or social psychological orientation of some researchers that make these researchers feel that accommodating the pro-service nature of communities constitutes an obstacle. I suspect that the reason why the applied interests of the Chinatown community were not perceived as an obstacle was the clinical psychological orientation of the research and of the researchers. The familiarity with human service delivery concerns and the focus on the individual, which are characteristic of a clinical psychologist are more consistent with certain community interests than the interests in group phenomena characteristic of sociologists or social psychologists. However, where clinical psychologists may have an advantage in having an orientation consistent with that of the applied advocates of the community, a clinical psychologist's training in survey research methods is weak, if not nil. In comparison, the public policymaker can use survey data to make recommendations on the basis of the attitudes, opinions, and knowledge of the sample studied. Platt

(1972), in fact, defines a researcher as one who not merely conducts research but puts forward policy recommendations based on it. However, she points out that unless the survey uses appropriate designs which include a control group, the study may only result in social criticism and fail to provide an objective analysis. Thus the clinical psychologist, sociologist, and public policymaker could learn from one other in the interests of better community research in Asian American communities. Price and Cherniss (1977), in fact, seem to describe the community action researcher as a practitioner of all three of the disciplines I have described. These authors maintain that research should be a tool for social action and that there should be no distinction between the practitioner and researcher. I propose that institutes on specific research methods relevant to Asian American communities be developed to train Asian American researchers and to develop greater collaborative training and research endeavors among Asian American researchers across the lines of these related professional orientations.

DIVERGENT ATTITUDES

Many ethnic communities are skeptical and distrustful of outside researchers. The literature indicates that it is the white researcher who is perceived by ethnic communities as exploitative (Couchman, 1973; Kelman, 1972) but the role of the Asian American researcher may still be somewhat suspect, as well. Should the researcher maintain the scientific attitude of objectivity for the purposes of not biasing her/his data, this attitude could be interepreted negatively by an ethnic community and establish a "where's s/he at?" suspicion. A researcher's motives, political perspective, ethnic identification, and ethnic consciousness contribute to a community's sense of comfort or discomfort with a researcher and her/his study. An ethnic community may be concerned that information revealed may be damaging to the interests of the community. Studies in which the psychological or social characteristics of a minority group are assessed could also have damaging consequences for the groups studied if not handled carefully (Kelman, 1972). Consequently, a researcher's sympathies for the community are required by the community to assure appropriate collection measurement, analysis, interpretation, and use of the data. The reseacher must take some value positions, must take sides as her/his personal and political commitments dictate (Becker, 1967), and must make value judgments in making policy recommendations (Platt, 1972). However, s/he must make clear to the community that unless s/he maintains an open-mindedness about the results, the research findings will not be trusted by outsiders, who will see the study as nothing more than an unscientific political tool lacking validity or reliability.

DIVERGENT STYLES

The style of scientific research is often affected by competitiveness and possessiveness regarding data and publication. The Double Helix, a book by James Watson about the discovery of the DNA configuration, conveys how the driving competitive spirit of the researchers towards other scientists was a prime mover in the discovery. Moreover, the conflicts of data ownership and personal resentment toward a former research colleague were also unashamedly revealed. The competitive and data-possessive attitude is a disadvantage in conducting good community research; a "shared-data use" concept should be introduced into community research instead.

The "shared-data use" concept implies that a researcher share her/his data (or certain portions of it) with community agencies who could use such data. It means that if a different type of data analysis needs to be done to provide the community with needed information, that the researcher assist the groups or agencies in such endeavors. It means that some of the research products be oriented toward use by community groups and agencies (Price and Cherniss, 1977). Furthermore, I suggest that the invitation for "shared-data use" be made long before the data is collected and not after the study has been completed. This would bring ethnic community members into fuller participation in the research process as well as make useful knowledge available to the community.

CONCLUSION

As Asian Americans trained in certain professional areas, we have an obligation to Asian American communities and we have an obligation to our profession. While the orientation, attitudes, and styles of both may differ at times, it is our duty to reconcile these differences and move forward towards broader knowledge and more effective action. And because community research poses risks and problems for the researcher, we need as much support from our Asian American communities as possible to accomplish these goals.

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A NEW MODEL FOR COMMUNITY-ACTION RESEARCH

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Community-action research is defined here to mean data gathering and information dissemination operations which are aimed at creating a community as a collectively acting unit. There are unique features of this type of community research which derive from action needs, but they also bring in focus the more general issues having to do with the relationship between method and knowledge.

TRADITIONAL SOCIAL RESEARCH AND ACTION

There is a ferment going on in the social sciences which brings into question some of the more cherished assumptions of social research. One of these assumptions is that a good theory is needed for effective action. A theory, to the extent that it is a scientifically efficacious one, promotes understanding of the phenomenon involved by providing an explanation that is deducible from that theory. It also leads to predictions of as yet unobserved events and thus makes it possible to control such events, meaning prevention of unwanted eventualities and realization of desirable ends. If theories have this power to control our destiny, it is clear that to increase theoretical knowledge is to enhance our ability to deal with the problems and promises of life.

On the basis of this reasoning, a premium has been placed on the pursuit of theoretical knowledge and research has been tied to this activity. Thus research, at least in academic circles, has been traditionally thought of--conceived, carried out, and evaluated--in terms of developing better theories by constantly putting them to test against empirical facts. This kind of research has been considered the most desirable, not only because it produces valuable knowledge per se, but also because it is supposed to lead to practical ends. After all, as Kurt Lewin once remarked, "Nothing is more practical than a good theory."

This research model of the physical sciences, when applied to social sciences, has tended to remove research activities from practical human concerns and in some cases to hamper effective social action; it may even have produced harmful consequences. But even in the physical sciences there is now a controversy as to whether theories are advanced by a test-of-hypothesis type of research. Also, it is doubtful that science, especially in its formative stage, contributed much to technical developments

which have produced far-reaching changes in human history; practical inventions of the tinkering variety have been more responsible for these.

And finally, there are fundamental differences between what the physical and social sciences study. One of the assumptions underlying traditional social science research has been that this difference in the subject matter is immaterial for the proper conduct of research--in effect social scientists have been enjoined to study human subjects as highly complicated objects. This methodological stance has led to three important consequences. One is, of course, that social science has become insensitive to the moral dimension of the human relations involved in social research. Thus we observe the phenomenon of social researchers exploiting human beings for the sake of merely promoting their professional careers, not to mention the prevalent practice of deceiving the subjects being studied and having them perform tasks which are morally reprehensible, all this, of course, in the name of science.

Another consequence is that this kind of research modeled after physical science has not produced knowledge which has any practical meaning for the people it is supposed to benefit. Research findings which fill volumes of scientific journals and monographs are not accessible to the people who, through their participation, produced them, and such findings do not lead to applications which are visibly beneficial to any significant degree.

The third, and perhaps the most serious consequence, is that the model of humanity which is created by the physical science paradigm of research, together with the accompanying methodological canons not only produces invalid data but also affects the human subjects in ways which are not always apparent and which may often be harmful. It is easy to recognize research projects which produce harmful ecological fallout. Increased concern has been expressed about these. There is parallel concern about the harmful effects of social research on the human subjects being studied, but the real harm lies not in obvious mistreatment of the human subjects, but in the distorted view of social relations projected by the traditional social research. (More about this later.)

This one-sided relationship between the researcher and the people whom he/she studies is not confined to explicitly theory-oriented academic research but is also characteristic of much of the so-called action research. In this latter type of research, there may be less talk of theory or of hypothesis testing, but even here subjects are treated as objects of manipulation who share

neither in the process of defining the research situation nor in the research product. This is because social researchers by and large come out of the academic tradition which emphasizes knowledge production divorced from practical action and sees the researcher as the owner of the research process.

Even when the research is avowedly conducted to solve concrete social problems--often with funded support--the favored approaches to the problems alienate the researched from the research. For one thing, the way the problems to be solved are construed is dictated by structural considerations of the funding sources. That is, what kinds of problems are worthy of research is a decision in which even the researcher, let alone the researched, does not have much say; it is ultimately an ideological question. The funding sources also largely influence the choice of research methods, through the mechanism of peer review, and the ones favored are those modeled after scientific research methodology derived from the physical sciences.

The rationale for excluding active participation of human subjects in the conduct of social research--in defining the research problem, choosing research methods, and sharing in research findings--has been that such interference would not produce scientifically valid results. But this antiseptic approach has not advanced social theories and has not solved any pressing problems. It has, in the meantime, mystified the role of social research, returned little to the people who made the research possible, and, in the long run, produced an ideology of status quo. Clearly, it is time for an alternative model of social research.

A NEW MODEL

The new model of social research has three features which radically differentiate it from traditional social research in the following ways:

1. The community participates in defining the research problem.
2. The research process is not separated from social action but becomes part of it.
3. The benefit to the participating community is immediate and tangible, rather than indirect and abstract.

In this model the research begins with a recognized need to promote community action. This need may be for alleviating a problem besetting individual members of the community or it may be for strengthening existing community ties or even creating new ones. In any event, a problem must exist in the community which

calls for pulling together resources for an effective solution. This presupposes the existence of a community, one that is somehow able to "feel" and "act" as a collective unit. But usually neither of these presuppositions, especially the latter hold true, and this creates the problem of how to identify the research/action needed. Initially, the need for social action, and for research to enable it, may be felt by scattered members of the community and may eventually emerge as a vague, shared viewpoint among a segment of the community. At this point, a researcher who is either a member of the community or is in tune with it could mobilize the fragmentary and submerged community sentiment and formulate a research problem. The initial concerns of the community then become explicitly stated as identifiable problems requiring social action and social research to make that action effective. The researcher's role here clearly is to facilitate the community process, and his/her research interests must be consonant with that of the community. A researcher may act as the prime mover in this process, but his/her research problem must address the need of the community that already exists, however submerged. It could also happen that the community, if it is a viable collectivity, may turn to a social scientist to have research conducted in conjunction with contemplated social or practical action. Even in this case, the researcher must identify him/herself with the community interest--he/she cannot be just a hired hand.

Wherever the initial impetus may come from, then, the researcher works with the community to define the research problem. He/she plays an important role at this stage in articulating aspects of the problem to be investigated and in putting diverse interests of the community into a collective perspective. Decisions having to do with who should participate in the research (defining the universe as a sample selection) and how data should be gathered (methodology) are also made jointly by the researcher and the community. At the least, the community must be consulted in these matters.

Social research entails interacting with members of the community and it produces social consequences, whether these are intended or unintended, slight or profound. The new model of social research consciously exploits this feature to make it an explicit aspect of research operations. The process of exploring research needs and articulating research problems is one which necessitates bringing disparate members of the community together in talking about common problems which need to be solved. Where no visible community exists except as an amorphous collection of individuals, this contact could be the beginning point of community formation, at least to the extent of creating

an awareness of community possibilities. Or, it could strengthen and add to existing community networks. To define common problems is to accept a common destiny. Decisions having to do with who should be involved in the study evolve around issues of membership in the community and thus serve as a means of establishing boundaries for the community. Participation of community members in methodological discussions--what information should be collected and how--further accentuates the importance of the individuals involved as active members of a community, thereby making conscious the existence of the community itself.

Once the data-gathering phase gets underway, social action becomes more extensively intermeshed with research. Research operations touch large segments of the community, if not all of it, and can serve as a medium of information exchange and social interaction, not only between the researcher and the community members, but also among the community members themselves. For this to happen, relevant information which is collected in the research process must be shared in the community so as to facilitate interaction and association among the members. This community use of research data, of course, can only be restricted to non-confidential data. Even so, this manner of sharing research information with the participants while the research is going on radically departs from the traditional model, where information flows only in one direction--from the subjects to the researcher. The researcher's role here is as crucial as it is unorthodox, since he/she must actively distribute the needed information and also facilitate formation of action groups in the community. This function of the researcher, of course, approaches that of a community organizer. Not all researchers are full-time community organizers, in terms of personal priorities, but this model requires that community researchers must get involved with community work, at least as facilitators. The reason for this is that the researcher is in a unique position of being the recipient of information from diverse segments of the community on a systematic basis which morally obligates him to utilize it for the good of the community, as well as making it possible for him/her to do so. Also, he/she can take a more neutral position with respect to the diverse issues in the community that might exist, because the research methodology commits the researcher to an even-handed approach. This is especially true if the researcher is somewhat removed from the community and is not associated with factions.

Thus, community research serves as a vehicle of community organization. There are other, more immediate ways community participants in their research can derive benefits from the

research. As research progresses, individual problems in the community will be revealed, whether the research is consciously designed to do this or not, and the research project should have provisions for handling some of these problems. The researcher has a moral obligation not to ignore the personal problems that he/she encounters, especially if these problems are dredged up as part of the investigation. Some of these problems can only be solved after the completion of the research project, which will hopefully lead to effective action. But research can and must be designed in such a way that interim solutions are provided for the pressing problems which face community members. This may take the form of providing referrals to social agencies or, more directly, making material and personal resources available. The communications network of research operations connects all corners of the community with the center (the researcher), forming an ideal mechanism for disseminating information and resources to different segments of the community. Furthermore, the researcher is in a unique position of being able to reach out in the course of collecting data and to uncover needy cases which might not ordinarily come to the attention of helping agencies. Research in this sense becomes a search for hidden troubles.

METHOD AND KNOWLEDGE

Mingling social action with research in this manner--involving the community in the process of formulating research objectives and methods, using research activities for community organization, and providing outreach services through the research network--raises questions of the validity of data as understood in traditional methodology. It might be thought that these action components of community research seriously compromise the objectivity of data collected. This view, however, emanates from the epistemology of a pseudo-science which maintains that data generated in vitro are true reflections of life. In vitro data are only possible if we assume that human communication has meaning outside the context in which it is made and that the knowledge produced by research should serve some abstract and obscure goals and should not immediately benefit the people who produced it. By now it is clear that neither of these assumptions is tenable. There is evidence that data collected in disregard of the context of communication, including practical human interest, are meaningless and only contribute to accumulation of informational artifacts. As a matter of fact it can be argued on sociological grounds that information which is meaningful to the informants themselves because they actively produce it for their collective purposes is more valid than seemingly objective data produced by formalized questionnaires intended for abstract and obscure ends to which the informants cannot relate.

THE REACTIVITY PROBLEM

Social research leads to a depiction of the life in the community, whether it is a statistical description of demographic characteristics or an assessment of needs. The research method employed in this process is intimately tied to the results obtained in such a way that the data gathering procedure influences the nature of the information obtained. Research methods create social reality in this sense. All data-gathering processes are reactive in varying degrees in that they produce results which are reactions to the way the data are generated. It is well known that different ways of asking questions elicit different answers and that information obtained by question-asking diverge from, say, what is surmised from observation of behavior. The very fact that an investigation is being made, or that the researcher is present in the community itself, may also affect the situation being studied.

This perennial problem in social science research has been resolved in two ways. One is to detach the researcher from the source of data as much as possible with the faith that this would produce objective data with a minimal degree of perturbation in the phenomenon being studied. This has been much the preferred approach but has not produced objective data, only an illusion of such. To the extent that the researcher removes himself from the source of data, the personal mechanics of the data-gathering instrument gain ascendancy and become obtrusive. For example, the structured questionnaire, despite its appearance of objectivity, is really obtrusive because questions asked, no matter how uniformly phrased and rephrased, create their own context of meaning which vary from person to person and situation to situation. Unless this source of perturbation is controlled, the resulting answers are not valid.

The other approach to the problem of the reactive nature of data-gathering in social research is to move the researcher in the opposite direction, that is, making him/her part of the scene being investigated. Participant observation represents this approach. In this method the researcher derives needed information by observation, aural as well as visual. Direct questions may be asked, but they are couched in larger exchanges arising out of ongoing social interaction, and answers to them are interpreted in terms of the social context in which they are made. Here there is no pretense of data being uncontaminated by the researcher, for the researcher actively participates in the creation of the phenomenon being studied: he/she is a member of the community. There is also no question that the knowledge thus gained of the community is far superior to anything a structured questionnaire might produce. Nevertheless, the observer role of

the researcher may create reactive disturbances, but to the extent that the researcher is absorbed into the community, this danger could be at a minimum. Especially in community action research, where the research operations are co-terminous with community activities, this problem poses no threat to the validity of data. Finally, questions may be raised concerning the reliability of such data--that is, are there distortions in the data due to the researcher's biases? Since, however, the researcher in this kind of research plows the information he/she obtained back into the community, the community as a whole acts as a reliability check. This takes place while the research is going on.

METHODOLOGY AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Social science research methods are products of Western culture and they work, at best, in a social milieu which takes the assumptions of this culture for granted. Specifically, asking questions to collect information presupposes that the respondents understand the rules of the game, called interviewing, which is to be distinguished from official interrogation, job interview, medical examination, polite conversation, or the airing of complaints. These rules are learned--to the extent that they are discernible--through socialization, and consequently anybody new to this culture will have varying degrees of difficulty in comprehending or using them. It is for this reason that social research with subcultural groups creates special methodological problems. It is sociological folly to proceed on the assumption that question-asking is interpreted in the same way by members of different cultural groups, and that standardized questions have the same meaning provided that correct idiomatic language is used. There are cultural variations in the way questions are interpreted, in the manner information is given, and in the attitude toward information sharing in general, and these variations must be taken into account in research operations. In particular, for Asian groups in this country, which have cultural backgrounds rather remote from Western culture in fundamental terms and which comprise large numbers of fresh immigrants, an unexamined application of such research techniques produces only technical artifacts.

I will mention here only some of the more obvious cultural differences that are methodologically relevant. Among Asians, in comparison with white Americans, there is more reluctance to talk about personal affairs, especially with strangers. Information is typically elicited through an elaborate technique of creating a proper context and by indirect indications rather than direct questions and answers. Problems are generally not discussed explicitly. Especially among recent immigrants, there is a tendency to answer questions as if responding to an official

investigation, to be unable to comprehend questions unrelated to their experiences or at odds with their conceptual schemes, and to not complain about their problems since they are "guests" here. And then, of course, there is the question of the language barrier, which cannot easily be overcome with translation, no matter how skillful. Questions phrased in one language project the peculiar cultural assumptions and values imbedded in that language which, in translation, end up making no sense or offending the sensibility of the respondent.

METHODOLOGY AND SOCIAL ACTION

The last issue I wish to discuss here has to do with the relationship between research methodology and the mode of social action. One aspect of this relationship has to do with the question of who controls social action. To the extent that the research problems are formulated without the participation of the community being investigated, the findings of the research will be similarly applied without any say from the community. The result is a kind of paternalism which characterizes many of the so-called action programs. Research is conducted and social programs instituted for social service recipients without the latter's involvement in the decision-making process. By contrast, the new model of social research calls for the involvement of the community throughout the research operation, from the definition of research problem to the sharing of research findings. Since this kind of research is initiated by a need for community action, it is natural for the community to play an active role in planning and carrying out necessary social programs. In other words, the community learns about itself and fashions its own fate rather than being treated by outside decision-makers.

The other aspect of the relationship between methodology and social action has to do with the constraints that research methods place upon the definition of the problem and hence upon the mode of solving the problem. It is by now fairly well-aired criticism that social problems are blamed on the victims of the defects of the social structure, and corrective measures are directed at individuals who suffer from these social ills rather than at the root causes of these ills. But the point is that there is a symbiotic relationship between this ideology of blaming the victim and the prevalent methodology of social science. To the extent that information is collected by asking questions of individuals who are more likely than not powerless and vulnerable, it is easier to proffer explanations of the phenomena of the investigation, in terms of personal characteristics thus uncovered and to seek remedies in intervention strategies. Furthermore, this format of data-gathering makes it difficult to raise the level of

analysis to deal with the structural variables contributing to social problems, even if such macro-level analysis should be desired. It is subtly misleading to direct research attention to those who can only react and adjust to changes in social structure, rather than to those who control the process of social change. This failure of social science research to adopt a methodology which is adequate to the task of dealing with structural aspects of social problems, issues from a dominant ideology which mystifies the dynamic forces which bring about social change and ultimately affect individual lives. Social science has played an important role in this process of mystification and continues to do so through methodological miasma, as well as through theoretical rationalization.

It is a fairly well understood phenomenon that the tools of research affect the flow of information, so that the data the researcher receives often do not truly reflect the event being studied. This is true of research in science in general, though it is especially serious in social science. But there is another way in which research tools do not merely act as neutral agents of information processing. And this is peculiar to research dealing with human beings. Social research is a form of social interaction involving the researcher and the researched, through which information is transmitted, to be sure, from the latter to the former. But messages flow also in the other direction in subtle ways to depict, indeed create, a social reality for the target subject of research. At a relatively obvious level, the set of questions put to the respondents defines the area of inquiry and thus delimits a possible world: the questions asked indicate what problems are considered important and suggests how the problems should be viewed and possibly solved. Directing inquiries to individuals, which is what is entailed in questionnaire/interview methods, in effect treats individuals, rather than collectivities, as units of action and creates the impression that meaningful social change can be brought about by helping and reforming individuals. There is also an inherent power relationship implied in social research where the subjects are questioned; the questioner assumes the dominant role. (This is one of the reasons why there is more research done on the powerless rather than on the powerful.) Thus, being researched by an outsider can become another means of being oppressed by forces beyond one's control.

SUMMARY

In considering social research for community action, I have presented problems connected with traditional social research methods. These can be summarized broadly as follows:

1. The promise of theory-derived research, modeled after research in physical science, has not been realized in terms of producing knowledge which is socially useful.
2. The predominant social research method, especially survey research, has excluded the subjects of research from the research process except as passive participants and has exploited them for gains in which they cannot share.
3. The attempt to overcome reactivity of social research data by a detached means of collecting data, e.g., structured questionnaires, produces technical artifacts which disregard the social meaning of research activities and hence are invalid data.
4. The method of collecting data by question-asking is based on hidden assumptions of the dominant culture regarding modes of communication, and hence is not applicable to subcultural groups not sharing these assumptions.
5. The survey research method is tied to individualistic paternalism, which in the process of being applied in social research, promotes the world view that social problems are caused by personal defects and that social remedies lie in administering therapies to suffering individuals.

I have proposed an alternative model of social research, which radically departs from the preceding survey research method, and overcomes the problems presented. Salient elements of this model are: the community participates in the research process as active participants in formulating research objectives and designing research methods, and shares in the information gained and benefits derived. The researcher acts as an active member of the community--as a community organizer as well as collector and disseminator of information. It is argued that this approach overcomes the methodological problem of the traditional social science research methods. What is more important, it demystifies the research process and immediately returns the benefit of the research to the participants. Furthermore, it helps create a sense of community as a collectivity acting as a structural unit in a larger society.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER

by William T. Liu
Director, AAMHRC

By asking our participants "What is community research?" we have provoked more questions than answers. My intention in this paper is not to render any judgment as to which one of many possible selections of "community facts" is truly "community research," but rather to discuss some of the issues raised in the preceding papers.

The real problem, it would see, lies not so much in defining community research as in identifying the purpose and functions of that process. To be more specific, and to paraphrase Harold Lasswell's well-known question about mass media research, the central issue is: "Who collects what kind of data, for what purpose, and with what effects on the community?" This complex question reaches beyond the scope of social science, and answers must be sought in the realm of ethnics. The question is more simply put in the familiar quotation "Knowledge for what?"

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

In traditional social science, the term "community research" means research on some aspect of human life in a community. A community is a group of interacting people sharing similar needs and mobilizing collective resources in finding satisfactory ways to meet these needs. It is through such collective efforts that a community establishes a shared understanding of rules and regulations. In short, community research means research into the group life in a geographically defined area, which can be a small but cohesive neighborhood, a section of a city, an entire city political unit, or a region.

Since normally the word "community" implies a definite geographic boundary, community research is often equated with research on people who share physical proximity. But community boundaries can transcend spacial contiguity; such boundaries can be established based upon life style, custom, kinship, language, and even race, which can serve as foundations of group interactions, creating symbols and meanings for those who share common characteristics. Thus it is legitimate to say that ethnic members in a society may, under certain circumstances, constitute an ethnic community regardless of their residential pattern. A community is possible through cultural proximity.

Researchers obviously cannot collect data on every individual in a community, nor can they collect data on every aspect of a community. What most researchers have done is to choose a small sample of data from an infinite number of observable facts about a community; the selection of such facts to be observed and recorded is based on the researcher's interests, either as personal preferences or as attempts to verify certain hypotheses. Differences in perspectives and ideologies often lead investigators to observe disparate samples of facts for different purposes, resulting in quite dissimilar understandings of the same community.

COMMUNITY-NEEDS RESEARCH

The War on Poverty has given many community workers the idea that unless the "needs" are established the war on poverty is not likely to be funded. Community agencies need resources to continue and to expand their programs, and to acquire these resources, they must collect statistics about certain needs. The more they can document aberrations in a community, the better they can demonstrate the need for services.

In the sixties and early seventies, community research to some literally meant community "needs" research, or simply "needs assessment," an important and necessary step in the arena of grantsmanship. Thus, Turk (1970) thought that if those circumstances under which communities can secure outside funds for improving the conditions of life of the people in the community were ascertained, they would constitute important research findings for all community planners. Turk analyzed statistics of the 130 largest cities in the United States and postulated that the "demand" function of poverty dollars can be measured by the percentage of low-income families, nonwhites, and youths not in school. It is through this notion of "demand" that federal poverty dollars are available to such communities, provided that local organizations can establish their "accountability." Sponsors of new programs are considered "legitimate" as long as they exhibit local cooperation (without salient evidence of cleavages). Turk has imaginatively and ably demonstrated that the number of federal dollars a community receives is associated with "needs" and ability to cooperate among legitimate sponsors. Alford (1975), on the other hand, points out that the same set of variables can suggest quite opposite policy recommendations, since highly organized elite groups can define themselves as representative of the community. The absence of conflicting groups may indicate the extent to which local elites have legitimized their own rules and have rendered potential opposition groups impotent. Thus Turk's indices of local cooperation may not reflect a true "absence of cleavages."

This is not the place to present the full argument either for Turk's original thesis or for Alford's counter-thesis. The reader is invited to consult both papers carefully. However, for the researcher, the way in which the available data is used and for what purposes becomes a "research and policy" dilemma, unless the researcher's own purpose is made clear.

Lucie Hirata (in this publication) notes that too often community (needs) researchers worry only about the symptoms (statistics on aberrations) but not about the causes of such symptoms. Perhaps this is one of the most serious problems "needs" researchers face. Inasmuch as the establishment of "needs" is necessary to obtain federal dollars, one wonders whether knowledge about the clientele is worth acquiring if there is no federal program to remedy the situation.

THE MORALIST VIEWS

Researchers sometimes view the woes of a community in the same way as a physician views his/her patients' physical pathologies. Certain symptoms are seen as indications of the well-being of the total system. The ambitious work by Angell (1951) on the moral integration of American cities is perhaps one of the typical examples of moralizing about community behavior with the use of measurable indicators. Angell postulates that the moral integration of American cities can be measured by the frequency of church attendance of its members, crime and delinquency rates, property improvements, and the like. His choice of measures indicates that deviation from the norm of mainstream American society is only one aspect of the total picture; the other side of the coin, "moral integration," requires an active commitment to the religious and moral values of the larger society.

Angell's work reflects a position from which researchers can view the "decay" of American communities as delineated by such external behavior as church attendance and improvement of one's property. If, as some studies have shown, church attendance is a function of social class (Liu, 1960), it seems possible that the indicators chosen by Angell reflect class bias. This is merely another example of a well-intentioned piece of community research that has resulted in potentially misleading findings.

SOCIO-POLITICAL INDICATORS IN COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Social planners and legislators, partly influenced by what natural science researchers have done successfully in engineering research, and partly because of their insistence on neutral, descriptive, factual data which can be expressed through figures,

have by and large reduced complex social and political phenomena into the single dimension of quantifiable indicators. Most policy-makers highly respect economists and economic indicators. In contrast, facts about poor grammar, lack of motivation, or hostility cannot be expressed directly with figures as can unemployment, monthly income, and household size statistics, all of which are the basic tools of economic and demographic research.

Social research aims at improving techniques to measure collective attributes through cumulative and comparative data. This raises the question of what facts can serve as valid data to be accumulated and compared: what constitutes an across-the-board "indicator." For example, would occupation, income, and education be as good indicators of social status in Newburyport, Massachusetts, as they are in New Haven, Connecticut? Is "lack of motivation" best measured by using a student's scholastic record, or by demonstrating the presence or absence of persistence in laboratory tasks or problem-solving situations? Can the same measure used for one cultural group be used for another? How can we make sure that the propositions generated in one community study are applicable in another? These are some of the obviously important research questions that all community researchers have to face at one time or another.

For example, one of the obvious successes of cumulative research is the measure of social status first used by Hollingshead (1958) in a middle-sized city in the Midwest, then in New Haven, and later in other cities by many other researchers, all with equally successful results; these measures were shown to have high degrees of internal and external validity. These successfully repeated methods also demonstrated that stratification in a middle-sized city in the Midwest probably has characteristics similar to that in a New England middle-sized city; more importantly, they showed that some attributes are more important than others in determining lifestyle, which in turn influences the motivation to achieve and the differential chances of becoming mentally ill.

An example of successful comparative research can be seen in the Shevky-Bell typologies of urban areas (1955), in which the authors used census information to measure census tracts along three dimensions of qualitative attributes: urbanism, social status, and ethnic or racial segregation. Such indices were used on the tract level regardless of city size. Tract analyses made it possible for social scientists simultaneously to do intra- and inter-city comparisons of sections of cities. Analyses conducted along these lines have been better executed, resulting both in questions

that can be more clearly stated and in more direct and relevant policies.

There are, of course, many other examples that one can cite in community research. Community researchers, like economists, are attempting to find the indicators which can best quantitatively express certain qualitative aspects of community life so that variations of these qualities can be clearly discerned. The advantage of the use of quantitative indicators is that variations can be monitored, and pre-determined criteria for intervention may be built into legislation. Most of the present indicators are related to economic research (unemployment, median income, retail prices, amount of new construction, etc.) or demographic research (birth intervals, median age at marriage, infant mortality rates, life expectancy, sex ratio, etc.), and, as a result, are not sensitive enough to reveal much about many qualitative factors. Much needs to be done to improve the present use of such gross social indicators.

It thus becomes clear that in community research, researchers in a variety of disciplines can extract various kinds of information. Economists and market researchers are interested in the exchange of goods and resources: political scientists are interested in the consensus and conflict that result in certain voting patterns by urban groups which diverge over issues and candidates; mental health researchers are interested in the epidemiology of psychiatric disorders and the contribution of ethnicity and class in the distribution of such symptomatologies; and sociologists and psychologists wish to know, for example, if the availability of bilingual education in a multi-ethnic neighborhood contributes directly to advances in academic work. While all these can be called community research, there is a common methodological principle which all researchers follow: the search is for better and more valid indicators. The process of determining adequate indicators is neither random nor without logic, though serendipitous discoveries have been reported; but even in such cases one needs to test the findings under different conditions. In short, community research, like all scientific endeavor, must follow some of the basic canons of scientific inquiry. Dr. Frank Miyamoto's paper (in this publication) places special emphasis on this point even though to many his reasoning may appear to be very traditional.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND APPLIED RESEARCH

Some people believe that community research pertains to those research operations whose results can be used by the community immediately. According to this view, community re-

search has the prerequisites of being "applicable" and policy-relevant. To be more specific, applied research can be seen on two different levels: one which relates to policy application, and the other which belongs to strategy application. The former concerns itself mainly with "decisions" made between two or more compelling arguments presented by people having divergent interests and moral/ideological convictions on topics involving moral or legal dilemmas. The latter deals with the selection of strategies by groups with similar or identical goals in mind.

In a sense, however, even the most academic and basic forms of research are "policy-relevant." The research on a basic model to discern variations in birth intervals and the age at which young women decide to get married may have enormous impact on possible family policy legislation, as evidenced in many countries, in the past and present. The continuing and cumulative collection of data by the Census Bureau and the National Center of Health Statistics is done precisely because the United States Congress needs such information to make sound judgments on legislative matters. But many policies are made without research; policy research and policy decisions are in reality an independent set of activities. The application of selected research results to policy matters is as much a political reality as it is a scientific process.

A different dimension of applied research deals with the choice of strategies. No one would disagree that choosing a method implies a prior decision regarding a collective goal. To choose a strategy, one addresses such questions as: Is the program morally justified, economically feasible, legally acceptable, and esthetically attractive? What are the short-term rewards and long-range consequences? The choice of strategies thus invariably enters, for example, into the discussion of evaluation research.

A generic term such as "applied research" has many different meanings and functions. At one level, program adminstrators seek information to determine if services are needed ("needs assessment"). On a different level, research is needed to see if means to attain goals are available and justifiable (such as in the case of finding defensible means to curtail birth rates). At the third level, ways must be found to implement the goal (e.g., busing, or rezoning to achieve racial balance in public schools), and to assess the plan adopted. Family planning work during the last two decades illustrates this point. In order to promote family planning in this country and abroad, professionals first had to convince opinion leaders of the danger of the present rate of population increase. The information came from demographers, who had to find the best ways to estimate population growth by assuming several levels of birth rates, mortality rates and factors which

may produce sudden shifts in fertility behavior; much of this process has involved very basic and theoretical research. Meanwhile, biomedical and biochemical researchers have been finding new ways in the laboratory to control ovulation and to avoid conception, using experimental animals. Even when new methods are found to be effective and safe, people are slow to adopt new methods for a variety of reasons. Researchers committed to intervention in the community must find ways to encourage people to accept family planning voluntarily, using methods that do not cause or exploit fear or guilt. Before all of this is done, painstaking and carefully controlled basic research in fields ranging from biochemistry to anthropology is necessary, without which the program would not be successful.

The planning and implementation of community programs require many of the same complex processes. To say that community research is applied research is not an effective entry into the discussion. First a good and sound program of community action cannot be built without looking at a problem from various angles. Second, it remains very difficult to differentiate basic from applied research.

To insist on a distinction between applied and pure research is at best misleading and, at worst, completely sterile. A distinction would be more productively made between good and bad research. Given the tasks at hand, collective decisions must be made in terms of research priorities. Whether or not a piece of research is used in public policy, or as a guideline for program implementation, is often not in the hands of researchers at all, but is a function of the political processes.

COMMUNITY BASED (CONTROLLED) RESEARCH

Much current discussion of research in a community, or in a neighborhood, especially in an ethnic community or ethnic neighborhood, centers around the exploitation of residents by academic researchers whose only interests are self-serving and whose products are rarely shared with people in the community. Whyte (1969) has spent much ink and space on this topic relative to anthropologists' work overseas, particularly in South America, suggesting that the profession should examine such behavior as an ethical issue. The exploitation of local and community people by academic researchers has a long history going back to some classical studies by sociologists and anthropologists; researchers as a result have different ways of perceiving their roles and have developed different ways of protecting the identity of people mentioned in their studies. Partly because of recent concern for the protection of human subjects--largely centered around bio-

medical research but also including social research--exploitation of subjects in any study is considered both a serious ethical infringement and a legal offense against federal research guidelines. In spite of these formal sanctions, ethnic communities are increasingly aware of their vulnerability and have become more sophisticated in dealing with researchers whose only goals are self-serving.

There are additional reasons for community people to resist research done in the community by outsiders, perhaps the most cogent argument being given in the paper by Chalsa Loo (in this publication), utilizing the concept of emotional and physical proximity. The difference between the view of an outsider looking in, and the insiders' assessments of their own environment, behavior, thoughts and feelings is a legitimate concern, and has been discussed elsewhere at length in recent years--for example, an entire issue of the American Journal of Sociology (1972). Community people have had numerous experiences of being misinterpreted, inadequately portrayed, and even ridiculed. Research findings often have had lasting harmful effects on the life styles and values in which community people take pride and from which they derive a sense of self-worth. Thus there are legitimate reasons to argue that research in the community should at least involve close collaboration with community people; Chalsa Loo's discussion of physical and emotional proximity is probably one of the most convincing arguments, while avoiding the suggestion that only the view of those arbitrarily defined as "insiders" can be valid.

Arguments against the opinion that only "community-controlled" studies should take place rest on two rationales. First, as mentioned before, no research should be the exclusive right of the insiders, though qualified and talented insiders are preferred. Good research, which might not reflect the overt views and feelings of insiders, may have equally important value in some instances. Second, a community-controlled study requires a definition of who represents the community. Is it City Hall? The local elites? Organizations A and B, but not C and D? Who are the power brokers who are franchised to sell out the community to researchers? At what price?

THE POSITION OF AAMHRC

Concluding a careful and open examination of the most salient concepts and issues, the Center's position is that, first of all, the commitment to community research must be upheld and remain a top priority. Second, all research initiated, conducted, and administered by the Center should have as its top priority the

benefit of the ethnic and geographic community it serves. Benefits derived from studies undertaken to advance the cause and the welfare of the wider Asian community will undoubtedly benefit local (geographically-defined) Asian communities indirectly. No study will be undertaken or endorsed by the Center if its sole purpose is to benefit the researcher. The Center's research staff will always work in conjunction with local community resource persons and will attempt to take a politically neutral position vis-a-vis intra-community and intra-ethnic conflict, real or potential. It would be against our principles for the Center to be controlled by, and thus serve only the interests of, a small group of community professionals, effectively excluding the larger ethnic community from desired interactions with the Center.

These are simply the minimum principles governing the Center's research conduct. Since the staff is committed to serve the Pacific/Asian communities throughout the United States, we must endorse a comprehensive definition of community research. First, we try to understand the various social and cultural factors (including political and economic) affecting these communities and the adaptation and coping reactions on the part of the people in them. Second, through the careful selection and analyses of such basic facts, we then can recommend courses of action through which legislative and judicial decisions may provide aid to or exert pressure on administrative actions, where such actions are needed. Perhaps our most important challenge is that the Center should establish research credentials by conducting good and sound research. Unless our research is scientifically sound, no amount of political or ideological effort can possibly make the Center an effective organization to serve its people.

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SUMMARY OF AUDIENCE DISCUSSION

A discussion by the audience followed the presentation of the papers. This discussion provided a forum for community people to participate in defining such issues in community research as: Who should do research in ethnic communities? What kinds of research should be done? What methodological problems are encountered in doing community research? How can those interested in community research get financial support from government funding sources?

WHO SHOULD DO RESEARCH?

It is commonly thought that a researcher should come from the community being studied in order that s/he can be sensitive to cultural considerations. The ideal community researcher would seem to be a bilingual/bicultural member of the community who has been well trained in research design and execution. Few community researchers combine this life experience and formal training.

Since the number of such ideally qualified insiders is limited, researchers from outside the community must be permitted to collaborate with community people in getting problems solved. Good community research can be the result of the joint effort that recognizes the contribution of the community's cultural sensitivity and that of the methodological expertise of the trained researcher. Such mutual recognition is often lacking, however; community members may be suspicious of outside researchers, believing them to be selfishly motivated, seeking personal gain rather than the good of the community. Their suspicions may or may not be realized, but the community remains resistant to outsiders.

Such resistance is not directed only at an outside researcher of another ethnic background--for example, one researcher mentioned that he had assumed that because he was Korean that he was "automatically" a part of the Korean immigrant community that he was studying. Because he did not live there or have friends in the community, however, he was treated as an outsider. But, his involvement in the community as a consequence of his research enabled him to become an accepted community member. Indeed, if a researcher is thorough and empathic, and brings to the task a willingness and capacity to see things from the community's viewpoint, a researcher's differing ethnic or racial background need not make good community research impossible. In the special case of researching American-born second, third, and

fourth generation members of an ethnic community, who may be indifferent or even hostile to their traditional heritage, community researchers of any ethnic background must do careful preliminary planning to ensure full cooperation of the study sample.

WHAT KINDS OF RESEARCH SHOULD BE DONE?

Research can be designed in a variety of ways in order to help the community. While the most obvious and traditional form of "helpful" community research lies in needs assessment, more conventional theory/hypothesis testing and other kinds of research can be structured to aid the community in solving problems. Advocacy-oriented studies may be one approach in this regard.

The interests of participating parties--that is, the researcher and the community--need not be identical for the research to be rigorously conducted, yet helpful to the community as well. It should be noted that the community is not necessarily monolithic; more than one interest may be represented. These multiple interests may indeed be contradictory. The efforts of a researcher from outside the community may be the means of resolution for such divergent interests within the community. One participant described a situation in which the interests of researchers and community people converged productively without being in other respects identical. In an area largely settled by newly arrived immigrants, women were being used as cheap labor in sweatshops. Representatives in the community had expressed concern about the working conditions the women had to endure, and were interested in taking action to improve the situation. Their investigations revealed two options available to the workers: unions or cooperatives. After lengthy debate, community people approached researchers and asked them to design research that would help them decide between these options. The researchers became part of a community effort to solve the problem, though they never became identified with the interest groups supporting either option. The researchers were given autonomy and independence to pursue answers to the problems posed by the situation, including those suggested by their own professional interests. They interviewed owners of the sweatshops, workers, and others in their attempt to help the community understand the problem and find a solution. Here the problem definition began in the community, and researchers were given the task of refining and clarifying the problem, as well as evaluating possible solutions.

Although communities in general favor research which will have immediate benefits to the community, such results may not occur because of the failure of the majority culture or the government to heed policy suggestions formulated on the basis of the research. For example, a study of Japanese Americans in Seattle in 1936 provided excellent sociological data for achieving some understanding of what Japanese Americans were like. But because on the West Coast there were deep historical roots of prejudice and discrimination toward Asians, the research data was of no benefit to the Asian American community. Instead, the larger society continued to perceive Japanese Americans in an inaccurate and stereotypic way, and as a result they were judged to be a dangerous population and were evacuated to camps at the start of World War II. This experience of Japanese Americans might have been different had there been more research on their communities, with wider dissemination of the findings. That is to say, research results may not alter all aspects of the minority group situation, but they are one way of changing the attitudes of the non-Asian majority.

WHAT METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS ARE ENCOUNTERED IN DOING COMMUNITY RESEARCH?

Cultural biases in research methodology is an area of particular difficulty in doing research in any ethnic community. The method used to collect data will in large part determine the outcome of the research. The researcher must be sensitive to the problems inherent in attempting to use a research tool designed to gather data from one community in research upon another community. These problems occur at a variety of levels: a question that is perfectly acceptable to ask of one person may be insulting, even if literally translated, to a person of another cultural heritage; body language may not have consistent meaning across community boundaries; or, symptoms and degree of severity may be interpreted differently by the researcher and the individual being studied.

For example, several Asian American researchers stated that using the standard interview or questionnaire methods with Asian Americans does not work very well. These methods derive from European cultural models which assume that direct questioning is the most effective route to finding out what you want to know. Asian Americans will answer questions, but their answers frequently are not what researchers are looking for. Asian Americans view explicit questions on many issues as an affront. Therefore, to the question, "Do your children have any problems?" the response may often be "no." Yet, over a period of time, problems sometimes become obvious to researchers in other

ways. For example, a young high school boy was interviewed and deemed to be normally adjusted by an Asian researcher from outside the boy's community. Later, through the grapevine, it was learned that the youngster was about to drop out of school. The fact that he was having problems with English and was unable to do his schoolwork had not emerged in the interview. When he was enrolled in a special English class for Asians, his attendance improved and he remained in school. In other words, long-term involvement on a regular basis in the research situation may be more culturally appropriate and productive than interviews.

Sometimes the problem is that the respondent and researchers are defining the situation in very different ways. For example:

Interviewer: "What is wrong with you?"
Chinese respondent: "I have a weak nerve."
Interviewer: "Why don't you go to see a psychiatrist?"
Chinese respondent: "I went to see my physician."

This Chinese person did not consult with a psychiatrist because he saw and defined his condition as physiological and biological. This is not a language problem per se between the patient and interviewer, but a deeper difference of problem conceptualization. A bilingual/bicultural researcher often has a better idea of how to translate the idiom of research into the idiom of the subject, and vice versa. Unless such translation is attempted, both questions and answers will be meaningless.

Such conceptual differences may also be a factor in the Asian American's tendency to underutilize public services, service providers suggested, and they stated that these differences are seldom taken into account at the policy level when designing such services.

It may be that the researcher is content with methodologies that catalog symptoms and is incapable of or uninterested in addressing the underlying causes of community problems. Though it is more difficult to identify and assess such deep factors than to describe their effects, the long-range contribution of such efforts is usually greater. For example, if the causes of community problems can be reliably located in institutions that lie outside the community, organization for political action will raise community consciousness and be more effective in creating longlasting solutions as well.

RESEARCH FUNDING

Considerable frustration was expressed concerning the difficulty in obtaining funds to study minority communities, and the discrimination minority applicants have encountered whatever their proposed area of research. This frustration was particularly directed at the funding processes of the federal government. Even special programs directed at supporting research by and about minority groups are not always fair in their consideration of the needs of smaller ethnic minorities, such as Asians, as opposed to those of larger groups such as blacks and Hispanics. The remedies discussed as most available to frustrated applicants ranged from diligent pursuit of appeal channels incorporated in the structures of the funding sources, to more stringent research design aimed at competing with other grant applications on the basis of research merit alone, rather than on the basis of ethnic parity.

SUMMARY

The discussions reflected a deep disappointment with existing models of community research as they have affected Asian Americans. Researchers of Asian descent clearly felt that much insensitive and inaccurate research has been done on Asian American communities by researchers looking in from the outside. There was general agreement that more work should be done from within the community by researchers who are sensitive to the culture of the group and who are accepted within it. Some would insist that all research on Asian minorities be conducted by a member of the specific research population involved.

Methodologically, problems with survey research among Asian Americans were emphasized. Long-term involvement with the members of the community being studied has the advantage of allowing social factors to be identified through actions rather than as a result of direct questioning.

The increasing use of the concept of "advocacy research" may enable a methodological deepening of community studies; institutional and cultural variables affecting the lives of Asian Americans can be revealed using innovative analytical research tools that are more powerful than the usual descriptive methods. Truly effective advocacy research for minority communities will be based in the future on a better perception of causal variables operating both within and outside of those communities, resulting--it is hoped--in more focused political and social action with more long-term positive results.

CONCLUSIONS

The issues involved in conducting community research are not easily resolved, nor can they be dismissed as trivial. Community members are increasingly wary of researchers who approach them with a bewildering array of complex questions and tests, promising that all this information is needed for the good of some ill-defined "cause." Funding sources, on the other hand, are skeptical as to the value of "populist" lay-conducted research, preferring to support professional researchers rather than community-prompted investigators who lack academic credentials.

If community research, then, is to take place, a solution to this seeming impasse must, finally, be sought in compromise. The researcher and the community must in each case determine together what each can agree to negotiate, and what values are non-negotiable, if the research is to have meaning and purpose for both. If some compromise cannot be determined, community research cannot produce results which have any value to the respective scientific or local communities.

Researchers must develop their research design with more attention to the purpose of the research, to the culturally induced sensitivities of the community being studied, and to the policy implications of the research they conduct. Researchers cannot command, nor can they reasonably expect, the willing and full participation of community members in research which has ill-conceived or poorly defined goals. The burden of convincing the community that the research is worthwhile, whether specifically to the good of the community, or more generally beneficial in the pursuit of factual information with implications beyond the confines of the single community, lies squarely on the shoulders of the researcher.

The community, for its part, must participate in such determinations at a level above the factional power struggles which too often make "community input" into research development a weakness rather than a strength. Community members must be more realistic in their expectation of policy impact of research conducted in their midst, as researchers are generally more isolated from "the powers that be" than is widely accepted by the communities. There is considerable distance between the cogent, well substantiated implication, which the researcher may legitimately be demanded to develop, and the empowering action of the social, political, or economic body to whom the implication was persuasively reported.

Finally, the community cannot expect the research to provide a political forum from whence the community addresses the surrounding world. Instead, the interest of the community should be directed to enabling the researcher to present a well-designed, carefully conducted piece of work which will carry the force of scientific validity behind the cause which both community and researcher have agreed to support. Political cant is a poor substitute for reason in the realm of policy determination.

Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center

ISBN 0-934584-04-04

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